

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Planning and Development) (Introduced by the Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform))	Executive Member Decision	01.09.2021

Commissioning of Consultants to Provide Local Plan Support – Local Plan Land Use Study

Purpose of report

- To provide details of the support to be provided and to secure approval for consultants to be contracted to carry out this work.

Recommendation(s)

- To approve the appointment of Land Use Consultants to prepare a Land use Study for the Central Lancashire Local Plan

Executive summary of report

- LUC were commissioned by the three Central Lancashire local authorities – Preston City Council, South Ribble Borough Council and Chorley Council – to prepare a methodology that can be used to assess the definition, terminology and coverage of various ‘open land’ designations identified in each authority’s current Local Plan. The analysis of areas covered by the existing policies will also consider whether any of these policy provisions should be applied to any additional areas of land.
- On completion of this methodology and agreement by all 3 councils, LUC have been asked to undertake the works identified to inform the development of the Central Lancashire Local Plan. This work is needed to progress work on identifying and assessing sites for allocation in the local plan, and importantly determining if sufficient land is available to meet our identified need.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Reason Please bold as appropriate	1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	2, a contract worth £100,000 or more
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards

**Reasons for recommendation(s)
(If the recommendations are accepted)**

5. To enable work to be completed this year to inform the development of the Local Plan. Delays in undertaking this work now will impact on the programme for delivery of the new plan, ultimately delaying its progress and adoption.

Alternative options considered and rejected

6. N/A this work was identified as a needing to be completed this year. LUC have completed work in this area for neighbouring authorities and experienced in undertaking such studies. In order to progress this work, direct contact was made to the consultant to assist in working up a methodology for this work and ultimately in carrying it out.

Corporate priorities

7. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	X

Background

8. A key component of a Local Plan is the identification of land for development and the development of policies against which future development is assessed. In preparing a new single Local Plan for Central Lancashire, we have identified a need to combine policies developed by each council into one concise document.
9. To do this effectively, we need to understand the purpose of the existing policies in each of the adopted Local Plans for Chorley, Preston and South Ribble, specifically those relating to the designation of land. The core strategy has overarching policies which each Local Plan links to, but they also have their own local polices, and although covering similar themes, are worded and implemented differently.
10. To address this issue, we commissioned LUC to independently review the polices and identify a process for updating them and developing a single policy approach which could be used for Central Lancashire, as well as looking at the existing Green Belt Boundary and how it performs against the tests in the NPPF.

Land Use Study

11. There are 5 key areas of work for this study as set out below:
 - a) A strategic Green Belt assessment (this will cover all the existing Green Belt, safeguarded land and other areas designated as open countryside in Preston and Chorley)
 - b) An assessment of areas of separation (areas of separation in South Ribble and Chorley are already being assessed as Green Belt. Preston will be assessed in the same way).
 - c) A strategic-scale assessment of landscape value (this will cover all of Central Lancashire’s open land).
 - d) A strategic-scale assessment of settlement settings (this will be applied to all settlements inset from the Green Belt and all settlements of a comparable size in countryside areas outside of the Green Belt).
 - e) Recommendations regarding policies for Central Lancashire to replace the existing Local Plan policies.

12. At this stage, no sites are being assessed, with the study focusing on the purpose of the designations themselves. A further stage of work will be needed to assess sites in detail.
13. The approach set out by LUC was presented to members at the JAC meeting in June 2021, and following that LUC were asked to put together a proposal of works. LUC have submitted a proposal to enable a draft report to be completed mid October. The cost of this work is £77,641.25 inclusive of all expenses. In addition to this, we have a cost of £14,939.38 for completion of the work on the methodology work already undertaken which also included a review of the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) process being used to inform the local plan, the latter was suggested by PAS to assist with this work.
14. This brings the total cost of work by LUC on this commission to £92,580.63. This does not cover any costs for a further stage which would involve the assessment of sites or land which the councils may wish to look at in more detail, specifically those which would be affected by the findings of this work, specifically the Green Belt.
15. The purpose of this stage of work is specifically to allow the assessment of land and policies to be undertaken, without any prejudice being awarded through knowledge of site suggestions. As such any additional site-specific work will require a further stage of works at an additional cost.
16. At this time it is not possible to know the detail which could be included in the next stage, specifically the number of sites that the councils may want assessing, as such costing for that work will need to follow the completion of this report.

Implications of report

Risk

17. Approval for this work to commence needs to be granted now in order to progress work on the Local Plan. Delays in commissioning this work will impact on the delivery of the plan and its ultimate adoption. This work is needed to inform the development of the Preferred options, without it, progress cannot be made on assessing and identifying sites and will prevent consultation taking place on the Preferred Options.
18. It is important to note that the Preferred Options is the last formal consultation stage on the Local Plan, with the Publication only allowing for representations on soundness. It is therefore important to ensure all evidence needed to support the Local Plan is in place to inform the development of this document, and also to allow for stakeholders to review and comment on it. For work on sites in particular, we need to have shown that we have fully considered all land options and assessed the functioning of the Green Belt against the NPPF tests to enable a position to be made on site suggestions put forward within this constraint.

The Councils Green Agenda

19. The work outlined in this report impacts on the following areas of climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda: net carbon zero by 2030, reducing waste production, limiting non sustainable forms of transport, working with sustainable and green accredited companies, limiting or improving air quality, limiting water waste and flooding risks, improving green areas and biodiversity.

20. The following remediations have been undertaken to limit the environmental effect: The Local Plan will develop policies which address all the areas listed above, this report will identify policies to support the Council's position on climate change and to assist in the delivery of targets.
21. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	x	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

22. The cost of this expenditure will be split between Chorley, Preston and South Ribble Councils equally. This budget is within the overall Local Plan budget which is monitored overall by Chorley Council and split accordingly

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

23. The proposed contract award has been approved via a waiver process with the reasons for departing from the council's contract procedure rules justifying this. The reasons are outlined within the report. Whilst the market has not been tested, the works proposed are specific to the councils needs and necessary to progress the Local Plan. Members have been consulted as to the scope of the works at the JAC acknowledged the likely cost and urgency.

Jonathan Noad
Director of Planning and Development

Report Author	Ext	Date
Carolyn Williams	5305	21.07.2021

Following careful consideration and assessment of the contents of this report, I approve the recommendation(s) contained in Paragraph 2 of the report in accordance with my delegated power to make executive decisions.



Dated 01.09.21

Councillor Alistair Bradley

Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform)